

REMARKS

Applicants request consideration of the information cited in the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 14, 2008.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application are respectively sought.

Claims 4-7 and 15-18 remain pending in this application. Claims 4, 7, 15 and 18 are independent and have been amended herein. No new matter has been added.

Claims 7 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,575,549 (Silverbrook) or by U.S. Patent No. 6,481,816 (Oyen).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claims 7 and 18, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the feature wherein, when the printing data corresponding to the N-th abnormal nozzle is added to that corresponding to the (N-M)-th neighboring nozzle and the (N+M)-th neighboring nozzle, a driving frequency for ejecting ink from the (N-M)-th neighboring nozzle and the (N+M)-th neighboring nozzle is increased by 2 times, the drive frequency being a frequency for driving the printing head to eject ink in performing the printing, timings of ink ejection performed based on an original printing data corresponding to the (N-M)-th neighboring nozzle and the (N+M)-th neighboring nozzle are shifted from timings of ink ejection performed based on the printing data added to the printing data corresponding to the (N-M)-th neighboring nozzle and the (N+M)-th neighboring nozzle.

Support for this feature can be found, for example, at least in Figs. 13A and 13B. Since the driving frequency is increased by 2 times, the timing of ink ejection performed

based on an original printing data of the neighboring nozzle (N+1) is shifted from the timing of ink ejection performed based on a printing data (Da') added to the neighboring nozzle (N+1).

Applicants submit that neither Silverbrook nor Oyen discloses or suggests at least the above-noted feature recited in Claims 7 and 18. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3 (and the accompanying explanation) of Silverbrook, a driving frequency is not increased by 2 times, unlike the present invention. This is evident from a comparison of Figs. 2 and 3. Dots on the consecutive columns 6, 7, and 8 are formed by the nozzle I in Fig. 2, and similarly dots on the consecutive columns 6, 7, and 8 are formed by the nozzle I in Fig. 3. Thus, the driving frequency in Fig. 3 is equal to that in Fig. 2. Also, dots 18 and 20 in Fig. 2 are formed on consecutive column 3 and 4. Accordingly, Silverbrook does not disclose or suggest increasing the driving frequency by 2 times. Further, Figs. 5B and 5C (and the accompanying explanation) of Oyen, to which the Examiner referred, also fail to disclose or suggest at least the feature of increasing the driving frequency by 2 times.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the present invention recited in Claims 7 and 18 is not anticipated by either Silverbrook or Oyen.

Claims 4-6 and 15-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Oyen in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,278,469 (Bland). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claims 4 and 15, the present invention includes, *inter alia*, the feature wherein when one of the (N-M)-th neighboring nozzle and (N+M)-th neighboring nozzle has a landing state worse than normal, the ratio of the printing data

corresponding to the N-th abnormal nozzle to be added to the printing data corresponding to the one neighboring nozzle is lower than that of the other neighboring nozzle.

Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least this feature.

In view of Figs. 5A, 5B, and 5C (and the accompanying explanation) of Oyen, Applicants submit that the pixels to be added to the omitted pixels in the pixel row 2 are the addressable pixels in the adjoining pixel rows 1 and 3, unlike the present invention. Ink ejecting conditions of the adjoining pixel rows 1 and 3 are not considered, and there is no suggestion to consider the ink ejecting conditions of the adjoining pixel rows 1 and 3.

In Bland, a higher quality nozzle and a lower quality nozzle are discriminated by using a sensor. The result of the discrimination is used to define a printmask having a mask pattern "which enables the deposition of more ink from higher quality nozzles and less ink from lower quality nozzles (abstract)". The result of the discrimination is only used to define the printmask. It is not suggested to use the result of the discrimination for another purpose, such as determining the ratio of printing data to be added to a neighboring nozzle.

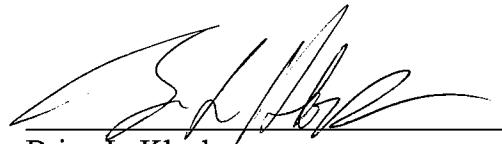
Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present invention recited in Claims 4 and 15 is patentable over Oyen and Bland, whether considered individually or in combination.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 4, 7, 15, and 18. Dependent Claims 5, 6, 16, and 17 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-identified Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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